

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

February
January 1989

CB-89-39

INTENTION TO REVISE SALES ESTIMATES. The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales will be revised based on the 1987 Annual Retail Trade Survey estimates. Revised estimates for January 1988 through February 1989 are scheduled for release later this week. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Tuesday, March 14, 1989

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for February adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes were \$138.2 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent from the previous month but 6.0 percent above February 1988. Total sales in the December through February period were 1.4 percent above the prior three months and were 7.0 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods decreased 1.3 percent from the previous month but were 3.9 percent above the previous year. Building materials were up 7.5 percent and furniture stores were up 11.3 percent from the previous year.

Nondurable goods increased 0.1 percent from January and were 7.3 percent above the previous year. General merchandise stores decreased 0.8 percent from the previous month but were 7.5 percent above February last year. Food stores were up 7.8 percent from the previous year, while eating and drinking establishments were up 8.3 percent in the same period.

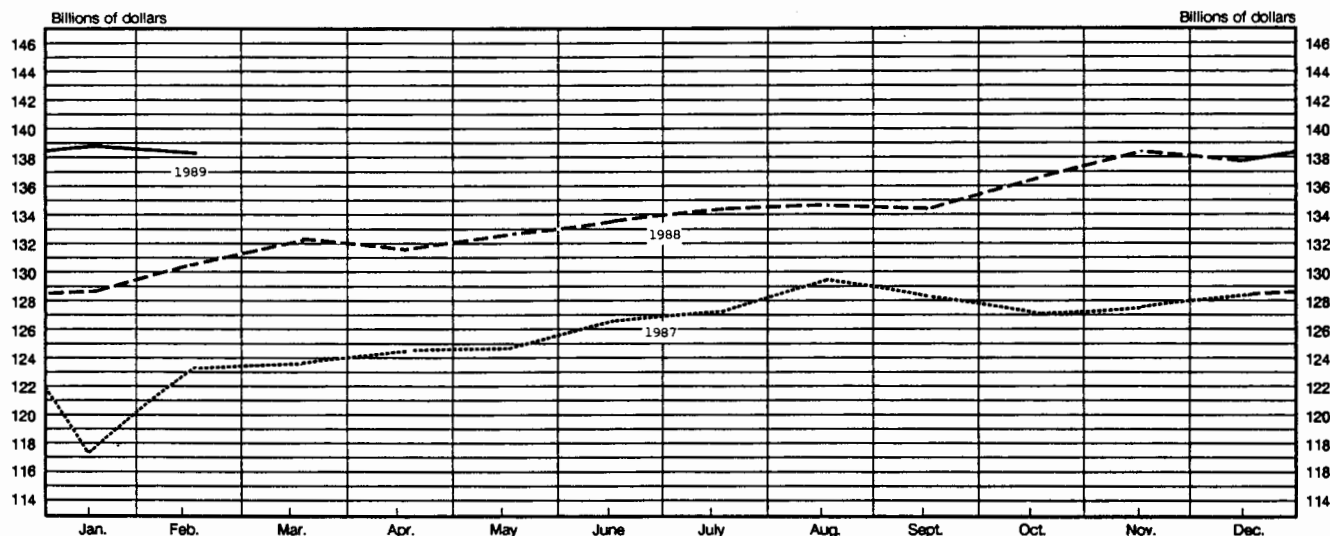
Note: Since this survey is based on a sample, the estimates will differ from the population values due to both sampling and nonsampling error. For the month-to-month, year-to-year, and quarter-to-quarter percent changes shown at the total, durable, and nondurable levels, the margins of sampling error range from .8 to 3.9 percentage points above and below the estimate. See page 4 for a more complete description.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for March is scheduled to be released April 13, 1989 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1987-February 1989

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1989		1988			1989		1988		
		Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. ² prel.
	Retail trade, total.....	117,493	121,288	169,460	115,101	113,639	138,232	138,849	137,862	130,424	128,844
	Total (excl. auto group)..	91,165	94,954	141,749	87,679	88,697	108,446	108,554	107,034	100,800	99,867
	Durable goods, total.....	43,804	44,769	58,331	44,126	41,293	51,756	52,442	52,620	49,828	48,710
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	5,317	5,711	6,921	5,214	4,852	7,324	7,509	7,424	6,812	6,511
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,406	4,967	3,910	3,573	(*)	5,759	5,625	5,058	4,777
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,045	1,494	929	961	(*)	1,297	1,290	1,200	1,181
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	26,328	26,334	27,711	27,422	24,942	29,786	30,295	30,828	29,624	28,977
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	24,426	24,280	25,322	25,389	22,894	27,414	27,876	28,420	27,154	26,559
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	22,079	22,617	23,032	21,047	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	2,054	2,389	2,033	2,048	(*)	2,419	2,408	2,470	2,418
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,967	7,491	10,927	6,457	6,577	8,196	8,256	7,832	7,364	7,198
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,891	4,801	3,387	3,385	(*)	4,328	4,093	3,810	3,753
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	3,098	5,178	2,641	2,750	(*)	3,375	3,198	3,071	2,963
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	829	1,328	742	776	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	73,689	76,519	111,129	70,975	72,346	86,476	86,407	85,242	80,596	80,134
53	General merchandise group stores..	11,128	10,970	29,917	10,662	10,318	15,897	16,029	15,722	14,784	14,847
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	9,200	9,191	24,957	8,846	8,618	13,295	13,457	13,226	12,389	12,436
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) ³	(*)	9,517	25,694	9,185	8,964	(*)	13,934	13,652	12,775	12,916
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	525	1,382	551	521	(*)	709	725	692	690
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,254	3,578	1,265	1,179	(*)	1,863	1,771	1,703	1,721
54	Food stores.....	25,807	27,200	30,807	24,693	25,682	28,695	28,658	27,946	26,622	26,219
541	Grocery stores.....	24,352	25,742	28,808	23,267	24,302	27,058	27,012	26,333	25,072	24,672
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,985	8,379	8,987	8,018	8,316	8,962	8,895	8,960	8,715	8,837
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,467	5,619	12,162	4,952	5,103	7,428	7,392	7,202	6,554	6,537
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	649	1,499	554	625	(*)	823	762	762	775
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,239	4,637	2,033	2,068	(*)	2,863	2,792	2,610	2,585
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,239	3,410	1,140	1,135	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,076	1,847	908	955	(*)	1,352	1,328	1,175	1,178
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,916	12,413	13,766	11,347	11,518	13,681	13,671	13,684	12,636	12,520
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,754	4,978	6,637	4,642	4,619	5,201	5,185	4,983	4,891	4,811
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,440	2,310	1,348	1,443	(*)	1,629	1,594	1,582	1,591
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	246	383	234	213	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAF. ⁴	(*)	28,447	64,488	26,135	25,935	(*)	37,247	36,114	33,750	33,566

*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available. ²Revised

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication.

²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Jan. 1989 advance from--		Dec. 1988 preliminary from--		Nov. 1988 through Jan. 1989	
		Dec. 1988 prelim.	Jan. 1988 final	Nov. 1988 final	Dec. 1987 final	Aug. 1988 through Oct. 1988	Nov. 1987 through Jan. 1988
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.6	+7.7	-0.1	+7.4	+2.4	+7.9
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+1.0	+8.6	0.0	+7.0	+2.0	+7.7
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.1	+7.5	+0.1	+9.2	+3.9	+9.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.4	+15.2	+2.0	+12.4	+5.7	+12.3
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.9	+4.7	-0.4	+8.6	+3.7	+8.4
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	-1.1	+5.1	-0.5	+9.2	+4.2	+9.0
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.4	+8.0	-1.1	+12.0	+1.7	+10.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.8	+7.9	-0.2	+6.3	+1.5	+7.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.7	+7.3	+0.1	+5.0	+3.2	+6.1
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+1.3	+7.3	+0.1	+5.5	+3.2	+6.5
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.1	+5.3	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+1.0	+8.2	-0.9	+6.6	+0.9	+7.6
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.2	+8.8	-0.9	+6.7	+1.1	+7.8
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.0	+4.5	+1.0	+4.0	-0.1	+3.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.1	+9.5	+1.0	+7.9	+1.6	+8.6
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1.2	+11.8	+1.1	+8.6	+3.4	+9.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+2.9	+6.1	-2.7	+4.5	+0.6	+5.7

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Dec. 1988 prelim.	Nov. 1988 final	Dec. 1987	Dec. 1988 prelim.	Nov. 1988 final	Dec. 1987
	Retail trade, total.....	75,163	54,903	70,238	50,911	51,147	48,411
53	General merchandise group stores.....	28,039	17,555	26,264	14,621	14,608	13,872
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	24,139	15,313	22,574	12,826	12,793	12,150
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	24,858	15,755	23,263	13,222	13,184	12,534
533	Variety stores.....	1,130	595	1,110	571	580	568
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	2,770	1,647	2,580	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	17,607	15,639	16,580	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,230	15,418	16,199	15,398	15,685	14,985
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,797	4,362	6,277	3,789	3,842	3,567
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	2,648	1,709	2,464	1,492	1,507	1,410
566	Shoe stores.....	1,167	816	1,102	788	791	755
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	4,231	2,921	4,037	2,908	3,002	2,790

NA Not available.

† Revised

¹ Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-88-12.

Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).



Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -0.6 percent to +0.9 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.3 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for December 1988 and final estimates for November 1988 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for December (BR-88-12). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates.

Whenever a statement such as "up 0.8 percent (+1.0%)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.2 percent to +1.8 percent. All ranges given are 90 percent confidence intervals. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of Business	Estimated coefficient of Variation in percent of the						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to- preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter					
		Range		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range		Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.
From	To	From	To								
52	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.6	+0.9	+0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. auto).	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-1.0	+1.8	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	1.7	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.2	-1.6	+1.8	+0.3	1.0
	Building materials, group stores.....	0.6	3.6	1.6	3.9	3.3	3.1	-5.2	+1.5	-0.9	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.7	2.2	1.9	3.1	2.3	3.0	-2.1	+2.7	+0.4	1.2
551,2,5, 6,7,9 57	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.5	3.7	2.4	3.2	-2.5	+2.8	+0.3	1.2
	Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores.....	1.6	2.3	1.9	3.7	3.3	2.7	-3.3	+4.4	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total...	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.8	+0.7	0.0	0.4
53 531	General merch. group, total. Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	-2.6	+1.8	-0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.6	-0.9	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.4	1.6	-0.8	+0.9	+0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.7	1.2	0.8	3.0	2.2	2.8	-1.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.0
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.2	3.4	1.5	2.4	1.8	1.8	-2.8	+2.2	-0.5	1.3
58	Eating and drinking	0.8	1.3	1.1	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.7	+1.8	+0.3	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary	0.4	0.7	0.5	2.3	1.7	2.1	-1.6	+1.3	-0.1	0.7

The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of March - July 1988.

The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, January 1988 - December 1988. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period May 1987-April 1988.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.